

## Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 A-01 OPR-02 SY-05

/083 W

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R 021403Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2644

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NAIROBI 3558

LONDON FOR HAVERKAMP

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, KE

SUBJ: KENYAN LABOR: STRIKE THREAT WITHDRAWN FOLLOWING

GOK CONCESSIONS

REF: NAIROBI 3169

SUMMARY: THREATENED GENERAL STRIKE IN KENYA HAS BEEN  
AVERTED FOLLOWING GOK ACCEPTANCE OF KEY LABOR DEMANDS AND  
MAY DAY ANNOUNCEMENT BY PRESIDENT KENYATTA OF LARGE WAGE  
INCREASES FOR MOST KENYAN WORKERS. AT SAME TIME  
KENYATTA REAFFIRMED PRESIDENTIAL BAN ON STRIKES AND DEMON-  
STRATIONS AND ISSUED STERN WARNING AGAINST THOSE WHO MIGHT  
CHALLENGE IT. END SUMMARY.

1. THREAT OF A GENERAL STRIKE IN KENYA, WHICH HAD BEEN  
SET TO BEGIN MAY 5, HAS BEEN WITHDRAWN AFTER GOVERNMENT  
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MOVES WHICH MET LABOR'S PRINCIPAL DEMANDS. IN MARATHON

NEGOTIATING SESSIONS DURING PAST WEEK LABOR MINISTRY AGREED TO A) DISCARD WAGE GUIDELINES, B) ALLOW IMMEDIATE RENEGOTIATION OF WAGE CLAUSES IN CONTRACTS SIGNED BEFORE JANUARY 1, 1975 AND C) ELIMINATE REQUIREMENT THAT TERM OF NEW CONTRACTS BE FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS.

2. IN MAY DAY ADDRESS TO WORKERS' RALLY IN MOMBASA, PRESIDENT KENYATTA CONFIRMED AGREEMENT WORKED OUT BETWEEN UNION LEADERS AND LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS AND ANNOUNCED SUBSTANTIAL WAGE HIKES FOR NON-UNIONIZED AND GOVERNMENT WORKERS. MONTHLY MINIMUM WAGE FOR NON-FARM WORKERS IN NAIROBI AND MOMBASA WAS INCREASED FROM 240 SHILLINGS (\$34) TO 300 (\$42). (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THIS FIGURE FALLS SHORT OF LABOR'S CALL FOR 400 SHILLING MINIMUM, THIS DEMAND WAS OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE SINCE PRESENT SALARIES OF OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF ORGANIZED, BLUE COLLAR WORKERS EXCEED 400 SHILLINGS). MINIMUM WAGE FOR AGRICULTURAL WORKERS ROSE FROM 70 SHILLINGS PER MONTH TO 150. LARGE INCREASES FOR MILITARY AND CIVIL SERVANTS WERE ALSO ANNOUNCED.

3. PRESIDENT KENYATTA USED OCCASION TO WARN WORKERS AGAINST DEFIANCE OF BAN ON STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH HE IMPOSED LAST AUGUST. LABOR MINISTRY OFFICIALS, WHO BELIEVE STRIKE BAN IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL, ARE DISAPPOINTED WITH PRESIDENT'S REMARKS AND WORRIED THAT MORE MILITANT TRADE UNION LEADERS MAY CONTEST ITS LEGALITY IN THE COURTS.

4. ALTHOUGH NEW WAGE HIKES ARE EXPECTED TO HIT AGRICULTURAL SECTOR HARDEST, INITIAL REACTION AMONG GROWERS OF KENYA LEADING AGRICULTURAL EXPORT CROPS (COFFEE AND TEA) SUGGESTS MINIMAL EFFECT WILL BE FELT SINCE MOST WORKERS ALREADY AT OR NEW NEW MINIMUM WAGE. SOME EMPLOYERS EXPECTED TO REDUCE NUMBER OF SEASONAL WORKERS AND ATTEMPT TO INCREASE MECHANIZATION IN PROCESSING.

5. COMMENT: PRESIDENT KENYATTA'S MOMBASA SPEECH WAS HIS FIRST PUBLIC ADDRESS SINCE MARCH 2 MURDER OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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J.M. KARIUKI, POPULAR PARLIAMENTARY CRITIC OF GOK. PARTICIPANTS AT MAY DAY CEREMONIES REPORT THAT PRESIDENT WAS GIVEN NOTABLY COOL RECEPTION DESPITE GOOD NEWS HE WAS BRINGING WORKERS.

6. JUMA BOY, ACTING SECRETARY GENERAL OF CENTRAL ORGANIZATION OF TRADE UNIONS (COTU), WHO ORCHESTRATED THREATENED STRIKE HAS EMERGED AS BIGGEST WINNER. ALTHOUGH LESS

POPULAR THAN EVER WITH PRESIDENT KENYATTA, JUMA BOY IS  
NOW EXPECTED TO WIN EASY VICTORY TO FULL FIVE YEAR TERM  
AS COTU SECRETARY GENERAL LATER THIS MONTH.  
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## Message Attributes

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